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LETTER DATED 28 SEPTEMBER 1994 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF RWANDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to submit annexed hereto the text of the statement on the question of refugees and security in Rwanda.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Manzi BAKURAMUTSA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Rwanda
to the United Nations

Annex

[Original: English]

Statement dated 28 September 1994 on the question of refugees and security in Rwanda

Following the April genocide and the resumption of war in April 1994, over a million Rwandese ran to neighbouring countries. Given that we already had over one million Rwandese living in exile for three and a half decades, the refugee problem acquired an unprecedented dimension.

In order to explain properly the current nature of the refugee problem in our country, we wish to inform the international community that the latest wave of refugees, which began in April 1994, was a result of a number of factors, and the refugees themselves fall into different categories:

(a) The first category includes the criminals who had committed the genocide and feared being brought to justice by the new Government;

(b) The second category of refugees includes those innocent people who were confused by the propaganda of the criminal clique and were actually intimidated and coerced into running away to exile;

(c) The third category includes the people who genuinely ran away, because the situation in the country was highly volatile.

When the genocide started in April this year the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) took up arms to remove from power the criminal elements that were responsible for the holocaust.

This was accomplished in July this year and the broad-based Government of National Unity was installed. Since then peace and security have returned to the country.

It has been a major preoccupation of the Government to see to it that all Rwandese refugees return to their country. To this end a number of steps have been taken, including the following:

(a) Committees have been set up to facilitate the return of refugees. Such committees include the Crisis Committee in Gisenyi and the Zairo-Rwandais Intergovernmental Committee;

(b) There have been meetings between Rwandese and Zairian local administration officials on both sides of the border. Similar meetings have also taken place on the border between Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania;

(c) High-ranking government officials have made visits around the country, meeting people and encouraging them to settle down and invite their friends and relatives still in exile to return;

(d) High-ranking government officials have visited neighbouring and other countries requesting them to assist in the repatriation of refugees;

(e) The National Radio has from time to time broadcast messages inviting all Rwandese refugees to return home.

Unfortunately, these efforts have been frustrated by a number of forces:

(a) Criminal elements from the last regime who are now living in refugee camps in neighbouring countries intimidate and coerce Rwandese refugees to prevent them from returning home. These criminal elements use all means, including killing those who insist on returning home. They also use propaganda and misinformation, alleging that there is insecurity in the country and that they will be killed on return;

(b) Some members of the international community frustrate the efforts of the Government by indulging in propaganda and misinformation, making unfounded allegations;

(c) There is evident reluctance by the international community to set up an international tribunal to expose and punish the criminals who are still at large. This is tantamount to diluting the question of genocide that was committed in Rwanda;

(d) There is also irresponsible reporting through the media that encourages divisive mentalities among the Rwandese along "ethnic" lines.

We categorically deny the following unfounded allegations made by the officials of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):

(a) That there are systematic and organized killings by the Government causing insecurity in the country;

(b) That there is a mass exodus of people fleeing the country to the neighbouring United Republic of Tanzania;

(c) That refugees do not return because of the alleged insecurity in the country.

## Realities on the ground

All refugees still outside the country wish to return home except the criminal clique that masterminded the genocide. Many returnees testify to this fact and also tell of horror stories of militias and former Rwandese Government Forces (RGF) who harass the refugees and make it almost impossible for them to return. The truth is that the refugees are hindered from returning owing to this harassment prevailing in camps in the countries of asylum.

There is no exodus of people from Rwanda to the United Republic of Tanzania. What is actually happening is that some refugees who left Rwanda are

changing positions and crossing from Burundi to the United Republic of Tanzania because of the apparent insecurity in Burundi, in fact some of them are advised to do so. There are also systematic movements of refugees from Zaire to the United Republic of Tanzania with hostile intentions of destabilizing the Government of Rwanda. There are cases reported where militias infiltrate inside Rwanda either to collect their families or coerce some people to join them outside the country. They even kill to create a sense of insecurity.

The Government of Rwanda is transparent: aid agencies and international media work and move freely throughout the country. We are open to international human rights observers and there is a United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) force deployed in all parts of the country. Surely, no significant incidents can take place without being noticed and reported. Those who attempt to make reports should always do so in an objective manner.

We request the international community to reinforce government efforts by:

(a) Ensuring that all aid earmarked for Rwanda is directed inside the country. The resulting improvement in welfare will encourage refugees to return and help those who have already returned to get settled. The majority of Rwandese are inside the country and they need assistance;

(b) Committing funds to the Government to improve its efficiency and capacity to implement programmes, for instance, in areas of security, especially the police. It would be very important to assist in training, investigation procedures and in any other fields;

(c) Setting up as soon as possible an international tribunal to try the criminals;

(d) Giving factual and objective information on Rwanda;

(e) Desisting from any acts that may frustrate the efforts of the new broad-based Government of National Unity;

(f) In particular we would like to express our disappointment about the manner in which UNHCR has behaved vis-à-vis the problem in our country;

(g) At the height of the genocide in April-May this year UNHCR officials dared make a false report that RPF forces were responsible for the genocide. Yet the whole world witnessed the militias of the Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement/Coalition pour la défence de la République (MRND/CDR) and the former RGF butchering innocent people in broad daylight;

(h) UNHCR accepted and widely publicized false reports by MRND/CDR militias in the refugee camp in Ngara, United Republic of Tanzania, which alleged that RPF forces had killed people at a church in Kibungo. When these reports were cross-checked by the United States Committee for Refugees and by independent journalists, they were found to be false. The dead bodies alleged to be the work of RPF were proved to have been those of persons who had died long before RPF appeared in the area;

(i) In the "French free zone" in the south-west of the country, UNHCR officials encouraged the people to run to Zaire lest they be killed by RPF forces when the French forces left. When no such killings occurred when RPF came in, the UNHCR officials were markedly disappointed;

(j) UNHCR reported bodies in the Akagera river in early September, purportedly resulting from government atrocities. Following this, the President made a week-long verification tour in areas along the river and did not come across a single body in it;

(k) At the same time it is very surprising to see that in the existing refugee camps in neighbouring countries the administrative structures are still in the hands of the known militias yet UNHCR overlooks and pays these administrators highly. This discourages the refugees from returning.

The above cases raise suspicions that UNHCR could have other motives not yet known to us. Otherwise how does one explain their continued baseless and unfounded allegations up to this day?

The Government of Rwanda reaffirms its commitment to providing peace and security and to encouraging the refugees to return home, since it is their right.

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